

## YOUR GUIDE TO

# Preparing for Pandemic Flu



South Carolina Department of Health  
and Environmental Control

## Pan Flu:

**Prepare. Prevent. Plan Now.**

Because of the potential for an influenza pandemic, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control wants you to know more about this public health threat. This pocket guide includes basic information about a pandemic and the threat it poses to you and your family. It also tells you what you can do to prepare for it.

To learn more about what you  
can do to prepare, visit

<http://www.scdhec.gov/panflu>

or contact your local public health department.



South Carolina Department of Health  
and Environmental Control

**Promoting and protecting the  
health of the public and the environment**

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(Spanish versions)

# DURING A PANDEMIC FLU

You might be asked or required to take certain actions to help prevent the spread of pandemic influenza. Follow instructions from public health officials and your health care provider.

## PUBLIC HEALTH INSTRUCTIONS

You may be asked or required to do things to help hold back the spread of a pandemic should it reach your community. If local public health officials or your healthcare provider ask you to take certain actions, it is very important that you follow those instructions.

**Here are some examples of what you could be asked or required to do:**

**Stay home.** Stay home anytime you are sick. Keep children home from school if they are sick. Staying home will be especially necessary during a pandemic to limit the spread of the disease.

You could be asked to stay away from large public gatherings such as sporting events and festivals. This request could be made of you even if you are healthy. Many public events could be cancelled during a pandemic because large gatherings of people help spread the flu virus.

Isolation and quarantine are public health actions used to contain the spread of a contagious disease. It will be important to follow isolation and/or quarantine instructions.

**Isolation** is for people who are already ill. These sick people will be separated from people who are healthy. Separating the sick person from others can help slow or stop the spread of disease. People who are isolated can be cared for in their homes, in hospitals, or in other health care facilities. Isolation is usually voluntary. Governments have the power to require the isolation of sick people in order to protect the public.

**Quarantine** is for people who have been exposed to the disease but are not sick. Quarantined people are separated from others. Even though the person is not sick at the moment, they were exposed to the disease and could become infectious and spread the disease to others. Quarantine can help slow or stop this from happening. States generally have the power to enforce quarantines within their borders.

# Prevent the Spread of Disease at Home

*There are steps you can take at home to care for a family member who becomes ill during a pandemic.*



## **Isolate the ill person *WITHIN* your home.**

A sick person should only leave the house to see a doctor or health care provider. Even if they start feeling better, the sick person should stay home for two full weeks after flu symptoms first appear. Do not allow visitors in your home while the person is sick.

Choose a room just for the sick person so they are separated from others. The room should have a door that can be closed.

The ill person should wear a protective mask when anyone is in the same room or car. People in the room or car with the sick person should also wear a protective mask. Wear disposable gloves when cleaning or disinfecting any area where the sick person has been.

## **Wash hands with soap or use alcohol-based hand rub.**

Everyone in the home should wash their hands with soap after contact with others, before preparing food, and before eating. Be especially careful to wash hands after touching tissues or surfaces soiled with saliva or nasal drainage. Remind children to wash their hands often.

## **Keep the house clean.**

On a daily basis, clean surfaces and commonly used items such as microwaves, refrigerator handles, phones, remote controls, doorknobs and handles, toilet seats and handles, faucets, light switches and toys. Use a labeled household disinfectant or a chlorine bleach mixture of 1/4-cup bleach with 1 gallon of cool water.

## **Cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing.**

Remind children and others to cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when sneezing or coughing, or to sneeze or cough into their sleeves. Put used tissues in a wastebasket, then wash hands with soap or use an alcohol-based rub.

Even when a person is wearing a mask, they should cough or sneeze into their sleeve.

## **Watch all household members for symptoms of respiratory illness.**

Contact your health care provider if you or a member of your household develops fever or other symptoms such as chills, cough, sore throat, headache, or muscle aches.

## **Keep supplies on hand.**

Keep masks, gloves, soap, tissues, paper towels and cleaning supplies on hand.

Make sure all sinks and restrooms are stocked with soap and paper towels.

Place tissues in all bedrooms and common areas like living, dining, family and computer rooms.

# Your Own Important Numbers

Write down important numbers and keep them close.  
These include friends and family home and cellular numbers,  
your doctor or clinic, and your children's school.



## GETTING INFORMATION

Local radio and television stations will be your best sources for information during a pandemic. Other sources include web sites (see Learn More). The state's Emergency Alert System (EAS) may provide specific emergency instructions for you to follow. These radio stations will broadcast EAS messages:

Aiken/Augusta .....	WBBQ-FM 104.3
Midlands .....	WCOS-FM 97.5
Charleston/Low Country .....	WNKT-FM 107.5
Florence/Pee Dee .....	WJMX-FM 103.3
Myrtle Beach/Grand Strand .....	WKZQ-FM 101.7
Greenville/Spartanburg/Upstate .....	WFBC-FM 93.7

EAS messages will include instructions to protect the health of you and your family. These messages may include the closings of schools, businesses and government agencies.

## Preventing Dehydration

Dehydration occurs when the body loses too much water and it is not replaced fast enough. It can be very serious and it can happen faster than you think. Start giving liquids when the first flu symptom appears. Remember these useful tips:

- In addition to plenty of liquids, be sure to give ice chips and light food that is easy on your stomach. Examples of these foods are soups and broths.
- If the sick person has diarrhea and/or vomiting, give special liquids that contain electrolytes. These liquids are available at drug stores and grocery stores. You can also make your own rehydration electrolyte drink for persons over the age of 12.
- If drinking liquids makes the nausea worse, have the person drink one small sip at a time until they start feeling better.

### Rehydration Electrolyte Drink for Adults and Teens

4 cups of clean water  
2 to 4 Tablespoons of sugar  
½ teaspoon of table salt  
½ teaspoon of baking soda

Mix all the ingredients until the sugar disappears. You can drink the solution at room temperature. You can add flavor to the solution by adding lemon juice or a sugar-free powdered drink like Kool-Aid. Do not boil the solution. Boiling will make it less effective.

# How to Contact Your Local DHEC Public Health Department

**The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control has regional offices located throughout the state. These regional offices are listed below:**

## **Region 1**

(Serving Abbeville, Anderson, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Oconee, Saluda)

**Anderson Telephone (864) 260-5541**

**Greenwood Telephone (864) 942-3600**

## **Region 2**

(Serving Cherokee, Greenville, Pickens, Spartanburg, Union)

**Greenville Telephone (864) 282-4138**

**Spartanburg Telephone (864) 596-3333**

## **Region 3**

(Serving Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, Richland)

**Telephone Number (803) 576-2900**

(Serving Chester, Lancaster, York)

**Telephone Number (803) 286-9948**

## **Region 4**

(Serving Chesterfield, Clarendon, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Kershaw, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Sumter)

**Florence Telephone (843) 661-4830**

**Sumter Telephone (803) 773-5511**

## **Region 5**

(Serving Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, Orangeburg)

**Orangeburg Telephone (803) 533-7116**

## **Region 6**

(Serving Georgetown, Horry, Williamsburg)

**Conway Telephone (843) 365-3126**

## **Region 7**

(Serving Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester)

**Charleston Telephone (843) 746-3800**

## **Region 8**

(Serving Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper)

**Telephone (843) 525-7603**



## **Use Emergency Medical Care Only When Needed**

It is very important NOT to go to the hospital except in the case of a real medical emergency during an influenza pandemic. Hospitals and other medical facilities will be flooded with patients during a pandemic. Many sick people will have to be cared for at home or at other non-hospital locations.

Call 911 only in the event of a serious, life-threatening emergency. But remember, the number of incoming calls resulting from an influenza pandemic may overwhelm the 911 system. Be prepared to use alternative ways to get medical help and find transportation to a medical facility.

# What You Should Know

**P**andemic influenza is a worldwide outbreak of a flu virus that is completely new to humans. People tend to get sicker from a pandemic flu than from normal seasonal flu. Humans have never been exposed to the virus before. Their bodies haven't built up much protection or immunity to it. A pandemic flu could spread easily from person to person. Outbreaks would come in waves. These waves could last months at a time. A pandemic could sicken or kill millions.

People's everyday lives could change in major ways during a pandemic. Schools might need to close for a while. Public transportation could be limited and air flights canceled. Many people will be sick. Many employees will not be able to go to work. Businesses and public services might have to close or limit hours.

Scientists and health experts are closely watching a flu virus among birds in Asia, Europe and Africa. They believe the virus could change into a type that could be passed from human to human. The result would be a pandemic—and a public health crisis.

Experts predict that the first wave of a pandemic could infect from 15 to 40 percent of the people in South Carolina. So it's very important to plan ahead. Government agencies are taking steps to better prepare for and respond to a pandemic. South Carolinians also need to prepare themselves and their families.

## ABOUT AVIAN FLU

**Avian influenza is also known as bird flu. Bird flu is very contagious among chickens, turkeys, game birds, waterfowl, and flightless birds like ostriches and emus. There are many different types of bird flu. Some are more serious than others.**

**Bird flu viruses rarely infect humans. But scientists are concerned about one particular type carried by birds in Asia, Europe and Africa. Scientists know the virus as H5N1. It's very rare for people to catch H5N1. People can only get the virus if they come in direct contact with the saliva or feces of an infected bird or if they eat undercooked poultry. But scientists warn that the virus could change in ways that would allow it to pass from human to human. That could cause a pandemic.**

**Bird flu can make birds like chickens and ducks very sick and can kill them. It is equally serious in humans. Some people in other countries have caught Asian bird flu from chickens and more than half of these people died. Scientists continue to watch this situation closely.**

**Bird flu symptoms last for up to 14 days. Symptoms usually include fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, shortness of breath and eye infections. The virus can cause life-threatening breathing problems including pneumonia. Treatment may include supportive care, use of anti-viral medicines, or even hospitalization.**

**You cannot get bird flu by eating properly cooked poultry or eggs.**

**Health officials recommend that you protect yourself against bird flu the same way you would protect yourself against seasonal flu or a cold (see What You Can Do).**



# WHAT YOU CAN DO

Reduce your chances of getting sick and help limit the spread of disease. Begin by building up your body's defenses. You can do this by eating a balanced diet, exercising daily, getting enough rest and drinking fluids.

## You should also do the following:

- If you get sick, it is critical that you stay home and stay away from others. This includes not going to work, church, or other activities outside the home.
- Don't send sick children to school. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Get a seasonal flu shot as it may help build up your immunity against pandemic flu.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with tissues. Put used tissues in the trash, then wash your hands. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve if you do not have a tissue.
- Clean and disinfect commonly shared surfaces, such as door knobs, telephone receivers, cell phones, TV remotes, sink and shower handles, and countertops.
- Stay informed by keeping up-to-date on a possible pandemic influenza by watching television, listening to the radio and reading newspapers.
- Monitor developments in South Carolina by visiting the DHEC Web site at <http://www.scdhec.gov/panflu>.

## YOUR PANDEMIC FLU EMERGENCY KIT

As many as 1 in 4 people in South Carolina could get sick during a pandemic. Businesses might have to close temporarily. Everyday services and supplies might not be available. The health care system may be overwhelmed and people may not have access to health services. Individuals and families must prepare to be on their own.

Make sure you have these items in your emergency preparedness kit:

- Two weeks worth of food that does not need refrigeration. Good choices include canned meats and fish, canned vegetables and beans, canned soups and juices, and dried fruits. Keep a two-week supply of dry goods like flour, salt, sugar, cereal, granola, protein and fruit bars and crackers. Remember to include canned or jarred baby food and pet food.
- Several days of water in sealed, unbreakable containers. Have at least 1 gallon per person, per day. Remember to store additional water for pets.
- Two weeks worth of prescription medicines.
- Two weeks worth of ibuprofen or acetaminophen (Tylenol) for each person in the house. This is for fever and pain. Store a two-week supply of cough medicine.
- Rehydration solution, such as Pedialyte for kids and Gatorade for teens and adults. To make your own solution for teens and adults, see Preventing Dehydration. For children, especially infants and toddlers, use a store-bought solution.
- Supply of face masks and plastic gloves. These will help protect you if you are taking care of family members who are ill.
- Disinfectants and chlorine bleach.
- Cell phone and charger.
- A list of phone numbers for local public health and safety agencies, local hospitals and clinics, your doctors, other family members, and your children's schools. Include both home and cellular numbers.

Learn more about making an emergency preparedness plan and kit from the American Red Cross. Call 1-800-REDCROSS (1-800-733-2767) / 1-800-257-7575 (Español) or visit their Web site at <http://www.redcross.org>.

# Seasonal Flu

# Pandemic Flu

There are some key differences.

## SEASONAL FLU

- ◆ It tends to follow a predictable pattern, typically appearing each winter.
- ◆ Most people have had it before, so their bodies have built up some protection.
- ◆ Healthy adults rarely suffer serious complications.
- ◆ Health care providers can usually meet the needs of patients.
- ◆ Drug companies can use known viruses to develop vaccines before flu season begins.
- ◆ Antiviral drugs are usually available.
- ◆ On average, 650 South Carolinians are among the 36,000 Americans who die from seasonal flu every year.
- ◆ Regular symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, and muscle pain.
- ◆ Although sick people miss school and work, seasonal flu outbreaks typically make a small impact on communities and the economy.

## PANDEMIC FLU

- ◆ It doesn't happen often. It has occurred only three times in the past 100 years, most recently in 1968.
- ◆ People have never been exposed to it, so their bodies have little or no immunity.
- ◆ It may cause serious complications even in healthy people.
- ◆ It could overwhelm hospitals and the medical community.
- ◆ Vaccines developed before an outbreak may not work. Even if an effective vaccine is developed, it could take months to actually produce it for public use.
- ◆ Effective antiviral drugs might not exist. If they do, the supply could be limited.
- ◆ The number of deaths would be much higher. South Carolina could have up to 3,600 additional deaths during the pandemic's peak. Worldwide, deaths could run into the millions.
- ◆ Symptoms would be more serious and there would be more medical complications.
- ◆ An outbreak could limit travel and business hours and result in school closings and cancellation of events. It could have a big impact on the economy.

## LEARN MORE

**Keep up-to-date on a possible pandemic flu by listening to radio and television and reading news stories about pandemic flu.**

Go to <http://www.scdhec.gov/panflu> for more information and fact sheets on pandemic flu, avian flu, and isolation and quarantine.

Go to <http://www.cdc.gov> for general information about pandemic flu and other health related information.

Go to <http://www.redcross.org> for all the information you will need to make your own emergency preparation plan.

Go to <http://www.pandemicflu.gov> for updates on national and international pandemic flu.

### **For Travel Information and Warnings**

Go to <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinat.htm> for health related travel information.

Go to <http://www.who.int/> for health related travel information and international disease outbreak information.